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# EXTRACTS FROM MR. ABBOT'S DIARY.

*(Concluded from page 43.)*

## NO. VIII.

*The good Impreſſion of ſome Remarkable Dreams.*

I HAD ſome little debate in my own mind, whether I ſhould add theſe, or not. But when I conſidered that even *dreams* are mentioned in Scripture, as one way in which God has ſometimes ſealed up inſtruction to men—That ſuch perſons as Mr. How, and Mr. Henry, have taken ſo much notice of ſome of their remarkable dreams, as to ſet them down in their diaries, and the writers of their lives did not think it improper to relate them—But eſpecially conſidering the notice our deceaſed friend takes of his was ſo wiſe, his reflections upon them ſo good, and his improvement of them ſo holy, I could not perſuade myſelf to omit them; and believe the reader will not reckon them amongſt thoſe dreams in which are divers vanities.

*March* 12, 1729.] The laſt night in my viſions on my bed, I thought the houſe in which we dwell was to be taken down, and we were to remove from hence. And what may be the meaning of it God knows! If it be a warning to me that any perſon in the family muſt die ſhortly; Oh! that they may be prepared therefor. And if it be to ſhew me, that the earthly houſe of my tabernacle muſt in a little time be diſſolved, taken down, and laid in the duſt; Oh! glorious God, be pleaſed, for Chriſt's ſake, to quicken me much in preparing for death; that I may not die, till for me to die ſhall be unſpeakable gain.

*Sept.* 12.] The laſt night in a dream, I thought I went to ſee a certain perſon, I was well acquainted with, and as I was at his houſe converſing with him, he looked upon and ſaid to me, *Within twelve days time you muſt die, and be laid in the grave.* Which dream when I awoke made ſome impreſſion on my mind. And well may it fill me with ſeriouſneſs and concern, if the day of my death be indeed ſo near, and I am in ſo ſhort a time to be lodged in the eternal world. But Oh!—whither!—whither!—am I going?—To eternal happineſs, or eternal miſery? One of theſe muſt moſt certainly be my portion.—

I know, and deſire to be more and more ſenſible of it, that I do moſt juſtly deſerve to ſuffer the ſtrange puniſhment reſerved for the workers of iniquity: becauſe of the ſin of my nature, and all the ſins of my life, which have been many as the ſands, mighty as the mountains, and all of a ſcarlet and crimſon colour. And, Oh! How holy and righteous would God be, if he ſhould make me a monument of his eternal wrath and vengeance!—But yet I am not left hopeleſs. No, no—Bleſſed be God, for that great and effectual door of hope opened for me, in our LORD JESUS CHRIST! Through whom God will accept of believing ſinners, that ſeek unto him for his love and favour. Therefore, O glorious God! I humbly ſay before thee, *I believe; Lord, help thou mine unbelief!* That thou canſt, conſiſtent with the glory of all thy adorable perfections; yea, that thou wilt pardon and accept of me, an unworthy ſinner, through my dear and only Saviour. *Lord, I believe; Help thou mine unbelief!* That as vile and wretched as I am, I may with ſafety appear before thee in the righteouſneſs of my lovely Saviour, as that which is every way ſufficient to anſwer for all my offences, and make me to ſtand guiltleſs, and juſtified in thy ſight, and entitle me to eternal glory and bleſſedneſs.

And now, moſt holy Lord God, I humbly ſay in thy preſence, that as I hope I have already, ſo I deſire now again, and Lord, I hope I *do* venture my ſoul, with all the concerns of it, upon CHRIST, as an all-ſufficient Saviour; deſiring humbly to rely on his power and promiſe, to do great and glorious things for me! And renouncing all righteouſneſs and excellencies of my own, I deſire to, yea, I hope I *do* truſt in the glorious righteouſneſs of my Almighty Redeemer, as that in which, and in which alone, I ſhall obtain mercy of the Lord. And if I may but have this righteouſneſs imputed to me, and be found clothed therewith, *I believe; Lord, help thou mine unbelief!* That for the ſake of it thou wilt paſs by all my ſins; that my unworthy ſervices ſhall find acceptance with thee now; and that when I die, whether ſooner or later, my departing ſpirit ſhall appear with joy before thy awful tribunal, and be ſet faultleſs before the preſence of thy glory with exceeding joy; while my body ſhall reſt in the grave, united unto Chriſt, until the reſurrection.

rection. *Lord! I believe,* That at the great and laſt day of judgment, I being found clothed with the white robes of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, (when my ſoul and body are again united) my bleſſed Saviour will own me for his, and preſent me before thy throne, without ſpot, or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing; and give to me a crown of life that ſhall never fade away; and bring me to ſing of redeeming love and grace, with an innumerable company of glorified ſaints, forever and ever; in that happy, bleſſed, glorious world, where I ſhall SIN NO MORE, *nor ſorrow any more:* where I ſhall ſing ETERNAL HALLELUJAHS unto GOD and the LAMB. Amen and Amen! Even ſo be it, Oh Lord!—Many ſerious and affecting thoughts of death were raiſed in me by this dream, which continued for ſeveral days together. Now though I would not lay too great ſtreſs upon dreams, yet I would not altogether diſregard them: But being I hope truly deſirous to be quickened in my preparations for death, by all ordinances and providences, I would improve ſuch a dream alſo for this end.

*July* 12, 1730. *Lord's day.*] The laſt night in my ſleep, I was greatly concerned and diſtreſſed about *the day of judgment.* I thought that there were ſeveral amazing and wonderful ſights in the world, that preceded this awful day. Yea, that time was at an end!—That the heavens were in confuſion and diſſolving; and that Chriſt was coming in the clouds with power and great glory.—And theſe things ſeemed real and certain to me. And how did I wiſh, as many will at that day, that there was time yet longer, to ſerve God in, and to prepare for the eternal world? And theſe thoughts had ſome good influence upon me this day; and I hope I deſire to improve it, as if it were the laſt Sabbath that ever I ſhall enjoy. And, Oh! that ſince my life, and day of grace, are ſtill lengthened out unto me, I might be very diligent and ſerious in the improvement of them, that I may be prepared for this dreadful day of the Lord, which is haſtening and will come, as a ſnare on all them that dwell in the earth. O Lord! Quicken me in this great work. Help me now to be by faith looking on things unſeen and eternal!—To live in the conſtant, lively, ſincere diſcharge of every duty, and ſo be always upon the watch! Let my life now be hid with Chriſt in God, that when He ſhall appear, I may appear with him in glory. Amen! O Lord! ſo let it be. ——

Theſe few paſſages may give us ſome *idea,* of that life of diligence, devotion, and ſublime piety, which this young man lived. All that read them will be ready to ſay, *He lived much in a little time.* May *the beauties of holineſs* diſcovered and ſhining in this *collection,* charm the reader into ſome happy imitation, and change him into the ſame image, by the Spirit of the Lord. Amen!

ON

# ON THE IXth OF ROMANS.

*(Concluded from page 60.)*

IN this ſentiment the apoſtle feels himſelf fully juſtified and ſupported by what the ſcripture ſaith unto Pharaoh, "Even for this ſame purpoſe have I raiſed thee up, that I might ſhew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." This example is of a piece, in regard to the preſent point, with that in the 13th verſe, where the elder is, even before his birth, deſtined to be ſervant to the younger. The inſtruction conveyed by them is, that God, upon his eſtabliſhed plan of government, has need of ſome to be veſſels of wrath, as well as of ſome to be veſſels of mercy; and that it is as he pleaſes whom to ordain to the one, and whom to the other. It pleaſed God to raiſe up Pharaoh to be a veſſel of wrath, for which he was fitted under the wiſe and righteous adminiſtration of divine Providence. The ſovereign will of God was as much concerned in raiſing Pharaoh for the end, to which he became ſubſervient, as it is in raiſing up and fitting others to be monuments of mercy. From no other kind of premiſes would the apoſtle have thought of drawing the concluſion he does. "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." As ſhewing mercy, in the one caſe, is God's act; ſo is hardening in the other. His hardening Pharaoh does not mean, that he merely left him without any gracious influences on his heart; and, of conſequence, he hardened himſelf. In this caſe, it would not be true, that his hardneſs proceeded from God; which I take to be the very thing the apoſtle is inſiſting upon: for his terms are determinately and unequivocally to this effect. "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth:" very different language from this; *Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will; and whom he will he ſuffers to harden themſelves in ſin.* Whether I am right in underſtanding the apoſtle in this manner, may, perhaps, be determined by having a critical eye to an objection, which is conſidered in the next verſe, and by noticing the manner, in which it is combated by the apoſtle. "Thou wilt ſay then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath reſiſted his will?" Here then the objector, being allowed to ſpeak, brings forward what would ſeem a notable difficulty. And it is to be remembered, that it is the apoſtle himſelf, who has put the objection into form; and, therefore, the objection muſt be conſidered as ſtanding againſt what *is*, and not againſt ſomething which is *not*, his real meaning in the poſitions objected to.

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The objector muſt be ſuppoſed to have underſtood what the apoſtle was aiming to prove, and againſt this to have levelled his objection. And now, what is the doctrine, with which a man would be likely to cavil in this manner? Is it this, that God was pleaſed to withhold from Pharaoh all the reſtraints of his grace, and let him oppreſs the Hebrews, and profane the name of Jehovah, as his own wicked heart might dictate, and then, in proceſs of time, puniſh him for his tyranny and impiety? Who would ſay, that God, having thus dealt with Pharaoh, ought not to caſt any blame upon him for being diſobedient to the word of the Lord? If it were not of divine foreordination, but of himſelf wholly, that Pharaoh acted as he did; would any man conceive, that God is not at liberty to condemn him, and give this as a reaſon for it, viz. that he was not reſiſting the will of God, but conforming to it? Would it ever occur to the mind of any man, that it is abſurd for God to find fault with his creatures for their wickedneſs, admitting that he never decreed their ſinful actions, nor uſed any poſitive direct influence to bring them into a ſtate of guilt? If it was contrary to God's expreſs command, and *not* according to any purpoſe in his eternal counſel, that Pharaoh withſtood Moſes and Aaron as he did; would any one upon knowing that ſuch obſtinacy againſt God was puniſhed with ſeverity, be apt to exclaim againſt it as a hardſhip? that God had no right to blame Pharaoh, becauſe he was only acting in conformity to the divine will? Nothing can be more improbable. It muſt be, then, that the apoſtle's antagoniſt arms himſelf, not againſt the doctrine which Paul inculcates accordingly as he is interpreted by Arminian expoſitors; but againſt his theory, as underſtood by Calviniſts. If the apoſtle means nothing inconſiſtent with wicked men's being the originating cauſe of their own ſinful actions, he is in no danger of being encountered, as he ſeems to apprehend he ſhall be by many. If his repreſentation of God is that of a being, who does not, by any poſitive agency of his own, raiſe up men to merit and receive perdition at his hand; but concerns himſelf with them only to take account of their evil deeds, and puniſh them as juſtice requires, none will reply by ſaying, "Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath reſiſted his will?" But let it once be conſidered, that the apoſtle's reaſoning makes it clear, that God does actually harden men's hearts, in conſequence of which they do thoſe things which provoke him to wrath, as it is contended was fact, in the caſe of Pharaoh, and thouſands will inſtantly cry out, in a raiſed and angry tone of voice, "Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath reſiſted his will?" If one preſumes to broach the thought, though upon the authority of Peter in Acts iv. 27, 28, that the doings of the wicked are, in any inſtance, what the hand and counſel of God determined

determined before to be done; very many ſtand ready to make anſwer, "Why doth he yet find fault?" &c. If God predetermined thoſe perverſe and malicious deeds in Pharaoh, Judas, and others, for which they have met with ſignal vengeance from the hand of divine juſtice, why are they deemed criminal and treated accordingly? Have they not done the will of God? And, in doing it, have they not deſerved good rather than evil at his hand? Can God be juſt, and yet miſerably deſtroy his creatures for doing the things he had determined they ſhould do? "Nay, but O man, who art thou that replieſt againſt God? Shall the thing formed ſay to him that formed it, Why haſt thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the ſame lump to make one veſſel unto honour, and another unto diſhonour?" Shall Pharaoh caſt reproach upon God, becauſe he made him Pharaoh, and becauſe he gave him a hard and impenitent heart, and not a heart to know and obey the Lord to let Iſrael go? Shall he call God to an account for raiſing him up to be a monument of divine juſtice, that the fame of the God of Iſrael might be reſounded throughout all the earth? Shall Jehovah, the former of every creature, be limited to a narrower prerogative, than the artificer in clay, who is not liable to be arraigned by the veſſels he has conſtructed, becauſe ſome of them he has deſigned for honour, and others for diſhonour? This is Paul's ſimilitude to illuſtrate the relation ſubſiſting between creatures and their divine Creator, who is alſo their moral Governor. In the uſe of this figure he is not alone. "But now, O Lord, thou art our Father: we are the clay, and thou our Potter: and we all are the work of thy hand." But what does the illuſtration prove? It proves that the apoſtle gives no inconſiſtent or abſurd view of God's character, when he repreſents him as raiſing up Pharaoh and other wicked men to be examples of his juſtice in the puniſhment of ſin; that God has a right to predetermine that in ſinners, which diſtinguiſhes them from the righteous, and then requite their wickedneſs with his diſpleaſure, as evidently as the potter has a right to determine beforehand, that of ſuch and ſuch parcels of clay he will form veſſels, which ſhall be fit only for the baſeſt and moſt diſhonourable uſe. If this be not the object, it cannot be learnt from any thing that is written; for to this point only has the caſe any pertinency at all. If God does not, by a direct and deciſive interpoſition of his ſovereign providence, raiſe up ſome to be righteous and others to be wicked, who would ever have thought that his diſpenſations with regard to creatures of a moral nature, might be likened to the proceedings of a potter in the practice of his art? The earthen veſſel of an uncomely and baſe countenance, or that is made only for the vileſt uſe, is as much dependent on the potter

ter for all its properties and aptneſſes, as the one which is fitted for the nobleſt and moſt honourable uſes. And if the work of a potter, in forming veſſels and fitting them for the uſe intended, truly and fairly repreſents the work of God in rearing up human characters and perſonages to be inſtrumental of his glory in the world; why muſt we not hence infer, that Pharaoh, and all like him, are juſt as dependent on God for what they are, for their baſe and criminal properties, as men of a contrary character are for their greateſt moral excellencies? If a denial of this be not that replying againſt God, which the apoſtle ſo ſharply reproves, it is difficult to imagine what he has in view, when he gives the objector ſo ſevere a reprimand. "Shall the thing formed ſay unto him that formed it, Why haſt thou made me thus?" Shall the veſſel juſt come out of the hands of the workman, complain of its former for giving it ſuch ſhapes and modifications, becauſe they render it unfit for any but low and vulgar uſes? Or ſhall Pharaoh, or any of his fellow-ſinners, make God accountable for raiſing them up to be ſuch creatures as they are, ſuch rebels againſt God, fit only to be doomed to that miſerable fate, which ſtands connected with impenitence? If this application be not juſt, there is in this ſimilitude the greateſt poſſible diſſimilitude to the object aimed at, and the apoſtle is guilty of the moſt conſummate folly and nonſenſe. For, if God does not exerciſe the ſame prerogative over men, in creating them and endowing them with moral qualities and affections, that the potter does over the clay, which he moulds into veſſels of divers ſhapes and capacities, it is hard to conceive how the apoſtle's bringing up ſuch an idea as he does is any reply to the inſinuation he has to repel. If it is by their own agency alone, excluſive of the agency of Jehovah, that men come to be what they are, enemies to God by wicked works, and in danger of eternal wo; who will feel an inclination to combat the ſentiment by making anſwer, as if Deity were implicated by it in unrighteouſneſs, "Why doth he yet find fault?" And if ſuch an objection ſhould be thrown in againſt the doctrine, what propriety would there be in calling it a *reply againſt God*, and for illuſtration, ſay it is like a veſſel's ſaying to him that made it, *Why haſt thou made me thus?* Admitting the caſe to be ſuch, and there is no man but muſt ſee a vein of impertinence running through the whole. If Paul was capable of uſing a *ſimile*, that moſt eaſy and common figure of ſpeech, with any colour of propriety; he is, undoubtedly, in the paſſage before us, vindicating the entire dependence of all men upon God for their moral character and temper of mind, whatever they may be. God raiſes up thoſe various, diſſimilar characters that flouriſh in the world, that he may get glory to himſelf by them. It is his willingneſs to ſhew his wrath

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and make his power known, that determines him to endure, with much long ſuffering, the veſſels of wrath fitted to deſtruction, in addition to which there is this further motive, viz. that he may make known the riches of his glory on the veſſels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory. Of this latter deſcription are all the ſubjects of effectual calling, whether Jews or Gentiles. From each of theſe large bodies of men God has, from eternity, choſen individuals to receive his grace and form the community of his covenant people, and that they might glorify his mercy. When this commonwealth, called the commonwealth of Iſrael, is completed, is filled up; the reſidue are conſigned to wrath, to be monuments of that power and juſtice, which at once exhibit the goodneſs and ſeverity of God; on them that fall ſeverity, but goodneſs towards all ſuch as are the called according to his purpoſe. While the whole Gentile olive-tree is reckoned wild, ſome of the branches are ſelected to be taken out and graffed into the good olive; and from the good olive ſome of its branches are broken off, that God may execute his ſovereign purpoſe of having mercy on whom he will have mercy, and of hardening whom he will. Therefore it is ſaid, "Iſrael," meaning the great body of the nation, ſo called, "hath not obtained that which he ſeeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the reſt were blinded (According as it is written, God hath given them the ſpirit of ſlumber, eyes that they ſhould not ſee, and ears that they ſhould not hear) unto this day." It was only a remnant in Elijah's time, and the ſame in the days of the apoſtle, that conſtituted what is called, *the election.* The reſt were devoted of God to deluſion and death. Theſe are the apoſtle's poſitions to prove, that all, who are called by grace into God's kingdom and glory, were eternally predeſtinated to this purpoſe, as veſſels of mercy prepared unto glory; and that all, who come ſhort of the glory of God, have a foundation alſo laid for this in the divine counſels, even from the beginning. They are raiſed up, as veſſels of wrath, to ſhew the power of God and his juſtice in the deſtruction of the ungodly. This fully accords with St. Peter, 1ſt Epiſtle, ii. 8. "And a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which ſtumble at the word, being diſobedient; whereunto alſo they were appointed."

Having endeavoured, by a natural and fair interpretation, to follow the track of the apoſtle Paul through an important and very explicit portion of his epiſtle to the Romans, looking more at the obvious ſenſe of terms, and the drift of the argument, in which they are uſed, than at what may or will be ſaid on the ſide of oppoſition; I come now to a very brief conſideration of what the warmth of ſome and the ſcruples of others will be apt to allege by way of objection. And

1. It will be urged againſt the foregoing, that it makes God the author of ſin.

*Anſwer.* There can no danger ariſe from admitting conſequences, which neceſſarily flow from the poſitions of an inſpired apoſtle. The preſent objection, therefore, has no force, ſo long as it does not expoſe any fallacy or weakneſs in the attempt we have made to aſcertain the object of the apoſtle's diſcourſe. To ſay, that Paul would diſavow the idea of God's cauſing ſin, is a mere begging of the queſtion. The objection, then, ought to take another form, viz. that the doctrine we have been contending for, makes God an *unrighteous* Being. Let it ſtand thus, and I ſhall commit the cauſe to Paul himſelf, as capable of giving it the beſt defence. "What ſhall we ſay then? Is there unrighteouſneſs with God? God forbid." This I ſhall conſider as a ſufficient anſwer to the objection, until ſomething is brought to view, making it preſumeable, that the preſent is not in ſubſtance, at leaſt, the ſame with the one anſwered by the apoſtle.

2. But it will be further ſaid, that, upon the plan we have advocated, God is proved to be an inconſiſtent Being, while he holds men accountable for their wicked actions, however groſs and abominable. If he raiſed up Pharaoh to be an enemy to himſelf and to his people, how can he blame him for yielding to the neceſſity he was laid under?

*Anſwer.* When a man ſhall be found of a wiſer head and ſounder heart than Paul; of him we may expect ſomething in addition to what is already before us; but until then, let it ſuffice to copy the words of the apoſtle, and ſay, "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that replieſt againſt God?" &c.

But the objector, not being yet exhauſted, proceeds further and ſays,

3. According to what has been ſtated above, it is pure nonſenſe aud trifling to preach the goſpel to ſinners, or uſe any means for their ſalvation.

*Anſwer.* Was it uſeleſs for Paul and Barnabas to preach the word in Antioch, becauſe thoſe, who were there converted by their ſucceſsful miniſtry, were ordained to eternal life? Agreeably to what is recorded in Acts xiii. 48. If God has a choſen number to bring into his kingdom, is it not neceſſary that the appointed means ſhould be uſed in order to the end? And one of the neceſſary means, with which God has connected this important end, is the preaching of the goſpel; not partially, or to a few, but to all. As it was neceſſary, in making the electing grace of God appear in a juſt and ſtriking light, that Eſau and Jacob ſhould be born of the ſame parents, at the ſame birth, and under the ſame diſpenſation; ſo it is neceſſary, for the ſame purpoſe, that the goſpel ſhould be preached to mankind

kind indiſcriminately, though a remnant only are made the ſubjects of ſaving faith.

I ſhall now cloſe my remarks with a few reflections.

1. Let no one ſay that the ſovereignty of God in election and reprobation is an unprofitable doctrine, calculated rather to obſtruct than facilitate the progreſs of true religion in the world. Paul, no doubt, meant to edify the Romans by writing to them as he did; and it would be very arrogant and impious in us to ſay, he miſtook the point, when he penned thoſe things, which we have had under examination. He meant to ſhow them, that God is greater than man; and that true piety conſiſts in acknowledging and reverencing him in his true character. And in this reſpect all may profit by frequent attention to the truths of the preſent ſubject.

2. From what has been remarked, we ſee the folly of objecting to the ſovereignty of God, as taught in the ixth of Romans, without taking different ground from what thoſe have, to whom the apoſtle himſelf has made reply. If any thing is to be gained by objecting to a doctrine, which is taught as divine, it muſt be upon the principle of its not being actually of divine authority. But do the objectors, we have to encounter upon this ſubject, think of carrying their point by outmatching the apoſtle Paul, and bringing him under the imputation of inculcating ſentiments without due authority? If not, why inſiſt upon thoſe very cavils, which he has confronted and overthrown? Let thoſe, who are diſſatisfied with the things here ſubmitted to their inſpection, bring forward ſome difficulty, that the apoſtle himſelf has not ſolved, and they will be entitled to conſideration. Otherwiſe, let them ſeriouſly inquire of themſelves, whether they are not fighting againſt God.

3. If any, who profeſs to love God, and to revere his word, do, nevertheleſs, feel themſelves grieved with what has been urged in the diſcuſſion of the preſent ſubject, they are humbly invited to inquire, how far the ſolidity of their objections may not be reaſonably ſuſpected from the conſideration, that, in this cauſe, they are in perfect harmony with the moſt implacable of God's enemies. The enemies of religion and religious truth hate to hear of the divine ſovereignty, as exerciſed in giving to others that pre-eminence, which they covet to themſelves. The moſt bitter revilers of religion and its divine Author are peculiarly inimical to that doctrine, which aſſures them, that all things are of God; and that he determines, irreverſibly, who ſhall be ſaved and who not. Upon this ſubject their unſanctified feelings riſe to an eminent pitch. But let divine ſovereignty be wholly in their favour, and not a word would they have to object. Their hatred of the doctrine proceeds from their own partiality; and how can thoſe of a contrary

trary temper join with them in deteſting it? If, from the obſcurity of certain texts of ſcripture, it ſhould become eaſy to conceive, that they countenanced ſome favourite ſpecies of wickedneſs, who are thoſe that would fall in with ſuch a conſtruction? and who would oppoſe it? Thoſe who hate the ſovereignty of God would make much of ſuch an opportunity to uphold themſelves in iniquity. Let it be carefully conſidered, whether their love, in the one caſe, and their hatred, in the other, be not from the ſame ſource; and let not the friends of truth be afraid of being too unlike its enemies.

4. We infer, that it is no reaſon for diffidence in the truth of our doctrine, that it is fiercely aſſailed, and with weapons, too, that have, at firſt view, a very formidable aſpect. When it was preached by Paul, it had heavy artillery brought againſt it. A plea, equally weighty, at leaſt, with any brought into action in our times, was then hurled, as if it were a dart dipped in poiſon, viz. that the moral perfections of God were impeached. And if the apoſtle ſtood up undaunted againſt ſuch oppoſition, and perſiſted in his cauſe, let not thoſe deſpair of ſucceſs, who are enliſted in the ſame warfare.

A PREDESTINARIAN.

NOTE. *Let it be carefully impreſſed, that God does not elect ſome becauſe they are leſs criminal than others, nor reprobate ſome becauſe they are the moſt criminal.*

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# ON COVENANTING WITH GOD.

## PART II.

*(Continued from Page 74.)*

A VARIETY of intereſting remarks naturally offer themſelves from a review of the preceding ſubject on covenanting, and keeping covenant with God.

I. The great and inexcuſeable wickedneſs of all perſons, who, under the light of the goſpel, neglect truly to return to God, to take his covenant upon them, and honour him in all his inſtitutions. They ſin againſt the authority, expreſs commands, and known will of God. They rob him of that worſhip which is his unalienable right, and their reaſonable ſervice. They ſin againſt the wonderful condeſcenſion and goodneſs of God in reconciling the world unto himſelf by Jeſus Chriſt, and in entering into a covenant of peace with rebellious men. They ſin againſt all the light and grace of the goſpel;

goſpel: againſt all the commands of God which require them to repent, to believe on the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and to obſerve all things whatſoever he hath commanded them. Againſt his expreſs commands to remember and honour him at his table. This do in remembrance of me. They ſin againſt the moſt endearing example of Chriſt, of the primitive Chriſtians, and of the whole Chriſtian church from its firſt inſtitution to the preſent time. They ſin againſt that precious, that alluring promiſe of their Saviour, That whoſoever ſhall confeſs him before men, he will confeſs alſo before his Father who is in heaven, and before his angels. It is ſinning againſt his diſpleaſure, againſt their own mercies, and the lives of their own ſouls, ſince he has aſſured them, That whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of him and of his words, of him ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed when he ſhall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels. What incalculable criminality is there in this? It is inexcuſeable wickedneſs. To plead impenitence, unbelief, and unpreparedneſs, is only to plead their wickedneſs. Faith, repentance and a preparation to every good word and work, are the immediate duties of all men to whom the goſpel is ſent. The goſpel feaſt is prepared, all things are ready. The ends of the earth may look and be ſaved. Nothing prevents but their own wickedneſs, their own unwillingneſs, their entire oppoſition to God and holineſs. This is their condemnation, that light is come into the world, and they love darkneſs rather than light.

II. That all attempts of unregenerate men to covenant with God, and pretences that they can do it conſiſtently, are abſurd and deluſive. How can they, with the ſolemnity of an oath, avouch the Lord Jehovah to be their ſovereign Lord and ſupreme good, while their carnal minds are enmity againſt him? When they will not have him to reign over them, and do not like to retain him even in their knowledge! How can they give up themſelves to God through Jeſus Chriſt on the terms of the covenant of grace, when in their hearts they reject him? When they will not come unto him that they might have life? How can they covenant to walk in all the ſtatutes and ordinances of God blameleſs, when there is no faithfulneſs in their mouth, and their inward part is very wickedneſs?(1) When there is no judgment in their goings.(2) How can they covenant or promiſe any thing in the name of Chriſt, while they have no faith in him, no union to him, nor any ſpiritual life, or covenant communications from him? Does not every thing eſſential, in covenanting with God, imply a new heart, love to him, and union with the Saviour? Does not the Almighty, therefore, that he may have a covenant people

(1) Pſalm v. 9 (2) Iſaiah lix. 8.

ple, who ſhall indeed be his, and that he may be their God, put his law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ?(1) Does he not, when he makes an everlaſting covenant with his people, that he will not turn away from them to do them good, give them one heart and one way, that they may fear him forever, and that they may not depart from him ?(2) How do all natural men deceive themſelves while they imagine that they covenant with God in ſincerity and truth, and that he is their covenant God and Father in Chriſt ? Or that they do, or ever ſhall keep covenant with him, while they continue in unregeneracy ? They cannot be accepted in covenanting with him, nor in their perſons, nor in any of their performances : for men are accepted in Chriſt the beloved only.(3) God can have no pleaſure in them : for without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe him.(4) They can have no communion with him, in time, nor in eternity. For without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord.(5)

III. That when, in covenanting with God, perſons make exceptions, in words or in their hearts, to the terms of the covenant, not renouncing all ſin, and not determining to perform all known duties, they do not enter into covenant at all. They can lay no claim to covenant privileges. Nor can there be any ſuch thing as keeping covenant with God without a conſcientious avoiding of all known ſin, and the performance of all known duties. The terms of the covenant are univerſal obedience. Thoſe who only call Chriſt Lord, while they neglect to do the things which he hath commanded them, can never enter into the kingdom of heaven. While men are not conſcientious in the performance of all known duties, whether they reſpect God, their neighbour or themſelves, whether they be ſecret, private or public, all their expectations of enjoying the bleſſings of the covenant are deluſive. They are but fooliſh virgins. When they ſhall ſay unto Chriſt, Lord, Lord, open unto us, he will tell them, I know you not whence you are ; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

IV. How great and awful is the guilt, and how dreadful will be the conſequences of dealing falſely in God's covenant ! Lying, perjury, and covenant-breaking are great crimes, when committed againſt men ; but much greater ſtill when committed againſt God. The more directly ſin is committed againſt God, his perfections and glory, the more heinous it is. The apoſtle Peter therefore repreſents the ſin of Ananias as exceedingly aggravated on this account, that he had not lied unto men, but unto God.(6) This is the caſe with all thoſe who covenant with him in hypocriſy and deceit ; and who

(1) Jeremiah xxxi. 33. Heb. viii. 10. (2) Jeremiah xxxii. 39, 40.
(3) Ephes. i. 6. (4) Heb. xi. 6. (5) Heb. xii. 14. (6) Acts v. 4.

who take no proper care to keep covenant with him. They ſwear falſely to their Maker. In his awful preſence, before angels and men, they call him to witneſs the truth and ſincerity of their vows, when they are made without a conſcientious regard to either. What ſolemn perjury is this! What a preſumptuous profanation is it of that great and fearful name, the Lord our God, and of his holy ordinance! What trifling is it with him, and with the momentous concerns of eternity!

Further, for profeſſors, after the moſt ſolemn engagements, to take no conſcientious heed to walk with God, is preſumptuous and abominable wickedneſs. It involves in it not only the groſſeſt hypocriſy and falſehood, but it is rebellion againſt the moſt expreſs and poſitive commands relative to their keeping covenant with him, and paying their vows. It is written, Thou ſhalt keep my covenant therefore.(1) Keep therefore the words of this covenant and do them.(2) When thou voweſt a vow unto God, defer not to pay it: for God hath no pleaſure in fools: pay that which thou haſt vowed. Better is it that thou ſhouldeſt not vow, than that thou ſhouldeſt vow and not pay. Wherefore ſhould God be angry at thy voice, and deſtroy the work of thy hands?(3) The guilt of falſe profeſſors is increaſed and aggravated, in as much as defiled with all this hypocriſy, deceit, covenant breaking, and rebellion againſt the moſt expreſs commands of God, they come to the Lord's table, from month to month, and year to year, and eat and drink unworthily, and are guilty of the body and blood of Chriſt. As it were at the foot of the croſs, in full view of the love and dying agonies of the Saviour, while he is evidently ſet forth as crucified before their eyes, they ſtill act the ſame preſumptuouſly wicked part, ſealing their covenant vows in hypocriſy and deceit. How often do they crucify the Son of God afreſh, and tread him under foot? What guilt can be compared unto this, except that of Judas in betraying his Lord? Will not the conſequences be dreadful to them, as they were to him? Will they not go with him to their own place? Will not their puniſhment be equal to their enormous wickedneſs? Shall not the congregation of hypocrites be deſolate? (4) Shall not their hope be as the giving up of the ghoſt? Is not Chriſt's fan in his hand? Will he not thoroughly purge his floor, gather the wheat into his garner, and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire?(5) Will it not be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah, than for thoſe who have thus violated the covenant of their God?

V. This paper not only adminiſters ſolemn reproof to covenant breakers in general, but particularly to perſons of this character of various deſcriptions. Some

(1) Gen. xvii. 9. (2) Deut. xxix. 9. (3) Eccles. v. 4, 5, 6.
(4) Job. xv. 34. (5) Matt. iii. 12.

Some there are, who, notwithſtanding their ſolemn covenant with God and their brethren, will, for ſome private pique, againſt their paſtor, or againſt ſome particular brother or ſiſter, entirely withdraw themſelves from their communion. Though their brethren can diſcover no juſt occaſion for it, and uſe all pacific and prudent meaſures to reclaim them, yet they obſtinately perſiſt in withdrawing themſelves both from their communion and worſhip. They join themſelves to no other church, and for many years, even to their dying day, neglect to honour Chriſt in the ſacrament of his holy ſupper. They will not hear their brethren of the church, will not ſubmit themſelves to them, as Chriſt has commanded, and as they had covenanted; will not even worſhip with them, nor do the leaſt thing to maintain the worſhip and ordinances of God among them, which they had expreſsly bound themſelves by covenant to do. Have not ſuch perſons broken covenant with God and their brethren? Do they not perſiſt in their wickedneſs? Are they not going to judgment laden with groſs and inexcuſeable iniquity? With hypocriſy, breach of covenant, malevolence and ſelf-will? Is not this really the caſe, with all thoſe who withdraw themſelves from their brethren and the divine ordinances, for ſome private offence, or fault in their brethren, which others cannot diſcover? Even ſuppoſing ſome brother hath been faulty, can this be a warrant for them to violate their covenant, and forſake the ordinances of Chriſt? Certainly it cannot.

Others there are who are found guilty of falſehood, fraud, theft, intemperance, adultery and other ſcandalous offences, yet when their brethren, in faithfulneſs to God and to them, attempt to reclaim them, by the diſcipline of the goſpel, they ſhow themſelves to be haughty ſcorners. They refuſe to hear their brethren and confeſs their faults, as Chriſt hath commanded them. Inſtead of this they hate their faithful paſtors and brethren, and ſpeak all manner of evil againſt them. They forſake their worſhip, manifeſt an implacable and revengeful ſpirit, employing their utmoſt exertions and influence to injure and ruin the churches with which they had covenanted to walk in brotherly love; and by all means to edify and build up each other. They proceed from ſin to ſin, from one groſs violation of their covenant to another. Do not they, like Judas, betray their Lord, and exhibit ſad evidence that they are irreclaimable ſinners? Do they not treat the blood of the covenant as an unholy thing? Can there remain for them any more ſacrifice for ſin? Any thing but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which ſhall devour the adverſaries? If he that deſpiſed Moſes' law died without mercy, of how much ſorer puniſhment ſhall they be thought worthy,

thy, who thus deſpiſe the authority, and tread under foot the Son of God?

There are other profeſſors who groſsly violate their covenant vows by an omiſſion of the duties of religion. They caſt off fear and reſtrain prayer before God, in the cloſet and in their families. They in a great meaſure, if not wholly, omit family government and religion. They pay no conſcientious attention to the bringing up of their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Though theſe duties were expreſsly ſtipulated in the act of covenanting, and though they are abundantly inculcated in the divine word, yet they diſregard them. They alſo too much neglect the aſſembling of themſelves together, and other duties of religion: eſpecially the duties of their particular relations.

There is yet another ſort of profeſſors, who, though they are zealous for ſome parts of religion, yet are groſs covenant breakers. They are not uniform and conſiſtent in their religion. They do not, like Cornelius, unite piety and righteouſneſs in their character; their prayers and their alms do not aſcend up before God. Some are externally very pious. They pray often, are zealous for the public worſhip, and talk much concerning religion; but they do not work righteouſneſs. They are unfaithful, unrighteous, covetous, worldly-minded, and not conſcientious in the performance of relative duties. Others have a fair outſide as it reſpects men. They are externally honeſt and liberal, but they have no piety towards God. Both theſe characters violate their covenant vows, and are deſtitute of true religion. They covenanted to be pious, righteous and charitable, and to walk in all God's commandments; in the performance of the duties of both tables; of one no leſs than the other.

Some profeſſors are very zealous for ſome branches of piety, while they, in a manner, neglect all the other. Though they are very deficient in their attendance on the public worſhip and ordinances in general; though they appear to be inordinately attached to the world, are careleſs and looſe livers, yet they are zealous and punctual to attend on the Lord's Supper. In this they ſeem to place a great part of their religion. By this they ſeem to expect to make an atonement for all their neglects of God and deficiencies in other duties. Perſons of all theſe characters are covenant-breakers, and ſtand reproved by our ſubject. They are all triflers with God and their own ſouls. They will, doubtleſs, continuing in their preſent ſtate, be finally cut aſunder, and have their portion with hypocrites. In the character of all true Chriſtians there is uniformity and ſymmetry; piety, righteouſneſs and charity. Then they are

not

not aſhamed when they have reſpect unto all God's commandments.(1)

VI. With what holy fear and trembling, with what caution, ſelf-examination and prayerfulneſs ought perſons to covenant with God? As it is a moſt ſolemn and intereſting tranſaction, the heart ſhould be moſt deeply impreſſed, and filled with great concern to covenant ſincerely in the love of God and in the faith of the goſpel: and alſo with the moſt fixed reſolutions, through the grace of God, to keep covenant with him. With what ſerioufneſs and impartiality ſhould they examine themſelves whether they are born of God? Whether their hearts are broken for ſin? Whether they are ſo united to the Redeemer by faith and love, as that they may expect grace and influence from him, enabling them to keep their covenant vows? Whether they really covenant with God in obedience to his will, for his glory, and the good of others? How cautious ſhould they be of deceiving themſelves and of covenanting, merely becauſe it is cuſtomary where they reſide, or to obtain ſome external advantages for themſelves or children; or to obtain a name, honour, or ſome worldly good? How ſhould they pray to God to ſearch them, and to try their heart and their reins, and lead them in the way everlaſting!

Having covenanted with God, with what vigilance, prayerfulneſs, conſtancy and zeal ſhould they keep covenant with him? Having named the name of Chriſt, how careful ſhould they be, not only to depart from all iniquity, but to ſhine as lights in the world, and bear much fruit, that their Father who is in heaven may be glorified? How ſhould they ſtrive to excel in all the duties of private and public life? And to be conſtantly growing in knowledge and in grace? How ſhould they add to faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godlineſs, brotherly-kindneſs and charity: that they may neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. In the practice of theſe duties they will adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour. They will be moſt uſeful in their families, and in the world; they will have the moſt ſenſible communion with God, the ſweeteſt peace in their own ſouls, and ſhall never be ſuffered to fall. Finally, ſo an entrance ſhall be miniſtered unto them abundantly, into the everlaſting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

(*To be continued.*)



(1) Pſalm cxix. 6.

For the MASSACHUSETTS M. MAGAZINE.

## A LETTER.

The following Letter, covering a TEN DOLLAR BILL, was found in the meeting-houſe at Holles, N. H. on the morning of a Sabbath in May laſt, on which a collection for the N. H. Miſſionary Society was expected.

Rev. SIR,

I WOULD thank you to communicate theſe few lines to the friends of Zion, if you ſhould think proper, after you have peruſed them, that they may know what God has done for me. I once thought that if I lived a moral life, I ſtood fair for heaven. But God was pleaſed to teach me to the contrary by theſe paſſages of Scripture: "*Except your righteouſneſs exceed the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, ye ſhall in no caſe enter into the kingdom of heaven. Your righteouſneſſes are as filthy rags and polluted garments. Except ye repent ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.* I then ſaw that God would be juſt if I ſhould periſh forever; for I had no righteouſneſs of my own, nor a diſpoſition to repent, although Chriſt ſaid, *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt.* And *he that cometh unto me I will in no wiſe caſt out.* Chriſt did not only appear willing in theſe texts, but through the Bible, and in every ſermon I heard he manifeſted to me a willingneſs to ſave the greateſt of ſinners (of whom I am chief) if they would accept of him as offered in the goſpel. But the plague of my heart was ſo great, as to prove this text of Scripture to be true, which ſays, *Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.* The painful ſituation I was then in, cauſed greater diſtreſs of mind than can be deſcribed by pen and ink, and I ſhould have continued to reject Chriſt and ſealed my own deſtruction ſure, had he not by his all conquering grace ſo far ſubdued my rebellious heart, that I was willing to yield myſelf unconditionally to him, wiſhing him to glorify himſelf, let what would become of me. I then felt a peaceful calmneſs in my mind, and continued ſo for a number of days, not knowing that I could claim the promiſes of God. The Bible now appears to me to be a new book, Chriſtians appear lovely ſo far as they bear the image of Chriſt, holineſs deſirable and ſin hateful. I have found more happineſs in religion than I can find language to expreſs. At this time I thought much about the ſalvation of periſhing ſinners, eſpecially about the poor heathen, who are deprived of the glorious goſpel

goſpel of Chriſt. I thought it my duty to give ſomething towards ſupporting the goſpel amongſt them. Although I am a poor girl and have nothing but my hands to help myſelf with, I thought over how much I might make in a year with a common bleſſing, and thought I would give five dollars to ſend the goſpel amongſt the heathen. But I was ſo bleſſed that I can give ten dollars, and yet have more than double what I expected. This I relate to encourage all thoſe that have a deſire to help the heathen. Knowing that there are ſome who ſay that they would be glad to give, but they are not able, I ſhall take the liberty to aſk them a queſtion or two. Have you not profeſſedly given yourſelves and all you have to God, and made the greateſt good your object? Have you not ſeen the time when you would have given the whole world if you had it in poſſeſſion for the ſalvation of your ſoul? The ſoul of a poor heathen I think is of as much importance as yours, and when there are thouſands periſhing for want of the knowledge of the goſpel, can you not, yea, will you not, give ſomething to ſupport the goſpel amongſt the poor ignorant heathen, when the cauſe is ſo glorious?

A FRIEND TO THE HEATHEN.

Rev. Eli Smith.

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For the Massachusetts Missionary Magazine.

Messrs. Editors,

*RELATIONS of Religious Exerciſes are, no doubt, frequently perverted to bad purpoſes. They prove injurious to thoſe, who take occaſion from them, either to* deſpair, *becauſe they may, in ſome reſpects, differ from what they have experienced themſelves; or to* hope, *becauſe they may, in ſome reſpects, agree with the exerciſes of their own minds. But, when properly improved, relations, whether read before a congregation or made public in print, may, by divine grace, be the means of conviction to ſinners and of edification to ſaints. If you conſider the following, which was communicated to a church in Maſſachuſetts, in the year* 1801, *as calculated to anſwer either of the above ſalutary purpoſes, you will pleaſe to give it a place in your uſeful publication.* THEOPHILUS.

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## RELATION OF MRS. H—.

ALTHOUGH I have been ſo highly favoured as to live in a place, where I have, from childhood, enjoyed a preached

preached goſpel and many other means of religious inſtruction; yet I ſpent many years of my life in ſinful folly and thoughtleſs ſecurity, forgetful of God and regardleſs of eternal things. I had no concern about a future ſtate, until ſeveral years ago, my health was much reduced, and it was the opinion of my friends and of myſelf that I had but a ſhort time to live. I was ſenſible that I was not prepared to die, and the apprehenſion of death terrified me. As the proſpect of death became nearer, my concern increaſed. Worldly happineſs appeared of leſs value, and future happineſs of all things the moſt important. In this ſituation, I at length thought that I was willing to die, provided I could be happy hereafter. This, I vainly imagined, was true ſubmiſſion to God's will; and for a time I enjoyed a kind of falſe peace and comfort. I have great reaſon to bleſs God that he did not leave me to reſt in this refuge of lies, till I had ſinned away my day of grace! I am now convinced that my heart was then wholly ſelfiſh, and that I was not diſpoſed to ſubmit to God any farther than I thought it would be for my own intereſt. As my health returned, I grew more thoughtleſs, till ſome time ago, hearing a ſermon, in which encouragement was given to the vileſt ſinners to come to Chriſt, and receive mercy, I thought I had a deſire that ſome preſent, whom I viewed as great ſinners, would attend to it and obey it; when the thought inſtantly ſtruck me, that I was one of thoſe vile ſinners to whom the ſermon was addreſſed. It appeared to me probable, that I was a much greater ſinner than thoſe to whom I had ſuppoſed the diſcourſe applicable, as they might have been left to act out all the wickedneſs of their hearts, whereas I had been left to act out but a ſmall part of the wickedneſs of mine. From this time I was brought under ſerious and great concern. The preaching which I heard ſeemed to be addreſſed to me. My danger of falling into the hands of an angry God appeared great and imminent. In this frame of mind, I felt great and ſenſible oppoſition of heart to the doctrines of the goſpel. I was told that I was totally depraved, that every exerciſe of my heart was enmity againſt God: but I did not feel my heart to be ſo deſperately wicked. I was told that I might be ſaved if I would, and that it was all my own fault that I did not obtain mercy: but I thought that ſo far from being unwilling to be ſaved, there was nothing I deſired ſo much or ſtrove ſo much to obtain as an intereſt in Chriſt. I was told that God would have mercy on whom he would have mercy, and that he was not under the leaſt obligation to have mercy on me: this I conſidered as hard and unequal.

Sometimes I thought I had a heart and did ſtrive to reform myſelf. At other times I would endeavour to apply encouraging

aging paſſages of ſcripture to myſelf, and flatter myſelf that God had already given me a new heart.

But as my conviction increaſed, I had a greater ſight and ſenſe of the dreadful wickedneſs of my heart. Till, one evening in laſt March, I became fully convinced that my heart was totally depraved and that I was wholly oppoſed to God and to the goſpel of his Son. I ſaw that I was utterly unwilling that God ſhould be God, and that I had no deſire to ſubmit to his will or to be ſaved on his terms. I felt that I abſolutely hated God and every thing good. My heart appeared to me to be more the heart of a devil than of a human creature. Being, at this time, informed of the hopeful converſion of a near neighbour, and aſked if I could not rejoice at the happy news, I was obliged to own that I could not. It made me angry to think that God would have mercy on others and leave me: and I envied all thoſe who I thought had been born again.

With theſe feelings, I retired to reſt. I was ſenſible that they were utterly unreaſonable and inexcuſeable. I ſaw clearly that I deſerved to go to hell. I thought, that if but one ſoul was to be made a monument of God's eternal wrath, I muſt and ought to be that ſoul. This appeared to me to be ſo reaſonable and juſt, that I thought I would not ſtrive any more about my own ſalvation; but let right be done. I thought that I would no longer oppoſe Divine Juſtice, but be willing to have God glorified in my deſerved deſtruction. My mind was inſtantly calm. I had a new ſet of feelings. God appeared juſt, good, amiable and glorious. It ſeemed to me I loved him with my whole heart: and that I alſo loved every creature. I thought of ſome perſons, whom I had conſidered as my greateſt enemies, and had even believed it a virtue to hate: now I could love them and pray for them. The way of ſalvation, through the merits of Chriſt alone, now roſe ſweetly into view. Chriſt appeared glorious, the chiefeſt among ten thouſands, and one altogether lovely. All my objections againſt thoſe doctrines of the goſpel, which tend to exalt God and abaſe man, in the work of ſalvation, vaniſhed. I did not, at firſt, think this was converſion: but I have ſince been led to hope that it was. From that time to this I have frequently had ſimilar views and feelings; but I have, ſometimes, ſuch an awful ſenſe of the infinite wickedneſs of my heart, that it ſeems preſumption to hope that I was ever reconciled to God. But, notwithſtanding, I cannot but think, that, at times, I have a ſincere and ſupreme regard for the glory of God, and a deſire to obey his will.

To

To the Editors of the MASSACHUSETTS M. MAGAZINE.

GENTLEMEN,

*AS you requeſt your correſpondents to furniſh you with eſſays on doctrinal ſubjects, I ſend to you the following dialogues, to be inſerted in your Magazine, or not, as you ſhall judge proper.*

N. P.

# DIALOGUES

## BETWEEN AGNOSTES AND PHILALETHES ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE DIVINE DECREES, &c.

*Agnoſtes.* IT has often been very diſagreeable to me, and really unaccountable, to find that many perſons, and even thoſe who appear to be good men, believe, preach and zealouſly attempt to propagate the doctrines of the decrees of God, election, &c. and call them *doctrines of grace*, profeſſing to take great ſatisfaction and pleaſure in them; which are to me very odious, and appear very abſurd; and involve many evil and dangerous conſequences, which are unanſwerable objections to them, which I have heard made by many, and ſome of them great and learned men. Will you be ſo good, Sir, as to tell me what you think of theſe doctrines? I hope you do not approve of them, for I own I love to hear them condemned.

*Philalethes.* Sir, this is an important ſubject, as it involves the character of God and of man, and ſo far as we err from the truth on theſe points, and our hearts are in it, we ſhall have wrong conceptions, and feelings, and exerciſes of heart both reſpecting God and ourſelves, which may prove fatal to us.

*Ag.* Though what you have already obſerved makes it ſufficiently evidently to me that you are in favour of them, yet I wiſh to hear you particularly ſtate and explain them, and anſwer the objections which are made againſt them.

*Phil.* I am ready to declare now, and at all proper times, that I firmly believe theſe doctrines, as I underſtand them; that they are in a clear manner and abundantly revealed in the ſcripture; are doctrines according to godlineſs; that the Bible cannot be underſtood, if they are rejected; and that all the objections that have been or can be made to them are without foundation, and can be, and indeed have already been fully anſwered.

But according to your account of yourſelf, you are ſo ſtrongly prejudiced againſt theſe doctrines, and have got into a confirmed

firmed habit and cuſtom diſpoſing you to hear them mentioned with diſguſt, ſo as to prevent your attending to what may be ſaid in favour of them with any degree of ſerioufneſs and candour; there is reaſon to fear that what I, or any one elſe can ſay in vindication of them, will not convince you that you are in an error, or do you any good, but the contrary.

*Ag.* If you look on me in ſo bad a light, and deſpair of doing me any good, you will not ſurely attempt it. But, Sir, I think you are too cenſorious. I own I have not ſo bad an opinion of myſelf. I think I am honeſt, and endeavour to live a moral life, which many do not, and muſt ſuppoſe that I am better than they are, and do much more than they, by which I truſt God is well pleaſed.

It is of no great importance what doctrines a man believes, if his life and practice be good. I endeavour to live according to the light I have, and do as well as I can, and doubt not that a merciful God will accept of me, and give me ſalvation. However, I will try to put on all the patience and candour of which I am maſter, and ſeriouſly attend, while you explain and vindicate the doctrines you hold, and wiſh you would do it.

*Phil.* Sir! you are quite wrong in condemning me as cenſorious, for ſuppoſing you to be of the ſame diſpoſition and character which you had expreſsly taken to yourſelf but a few minutes paſt, in this very converſation. I believed you when you ſaid it, as I have known many others who oppoſe the doctrines now in queſtion, to feel towards and treat them juſt as you have ſaid you have done. And you have made a miſtake in repreſenting me as *deſpairing* that you, or others of your diſpoſition and ſentiments would ever be convinced of your error, and of the truth of the doctrines which I believe. I only ſaid, there was reaſon to *fear* this would not take place, which is conſiſtent with a *hope* that it may, and conſequently with encouragement to attempt it. I have known perſons as much prejudiced and as ignorant as you appear to be, reſpecting theſe doctrines, who have been at length ſo diſpoſed to attend to arguments in favour of them, as to be convinced in their judgment and conſcience that they are the doctrines of the Bible. And while under this conviction, the Spirit of God has ſo changed their hearts as that they have cordially embraced them, not only as true, but as important, excellent, ſweet and comforting truths.

As to your notion that it is of no great importance, and indeed no matter what men believe, if their lives be good, it tends to prevent taking much pains to ſearch after truth; for why ſhould we be much concerned to find out what is truth, which can do us little or no good? But I hope you will relinquiſh

linquiſh this abſurd notion, ſo contrary to ſcripture and common ſenſe. If truth and the belief and knowledge of it be of no importance, the Bible is a needleſs book, for that is a revelation of the *truth*, and it is of no worth in any other view. There we have a chain of connected, conſiſtent, important truth, which is by way of eminence called THE TRUTH, to which Chriſt ſays he came into the world to bear witneſs. To come to the knowledge and cordial belief of this truth is repreſented as eſſential in order to ſalvation, and connected with it. And not believing and loving *the truth*, is connected with ſtrong deluſion, and final deſtruction. And who can read the epiſtles of the apoſtles, eſpecially thoſe of Paul, without obſerving their care and zeal in detecting and oppoſing error, and vindicating the doctrines of the goſpel, in which it really conſiſted. And the latter exhorts Timothy to take heed what doctrines he preached, and be careful to preach thoſe only by which all who cordially embraced them ſhould be ſaved, implying that there were falſe doctrines, which, if preached to men, and were heartily received by them, would iſſue in their deſtruction. Therefore they who preach no diſtinguiſhing doctrines, as well as they who preach falſe doctrines, are ſuch preachers as Paul would not recommend.

But aſide from ſcripture, this notion is moſt unreaſonable and abſurd. It ſuppoſes that all the moral good, of which men are capable, conſiſts in thoſe external actions which are diſtinct from all exerciſes of the heart as connected with and produced by them, in which external actions, thus conſidered, there is no more moral good, than there is in the motions of a tree produced by the wind. All real morality eſſentially conſiſts in the moral exerciſes of the heart, by which external actions are produced; and theſe exerciſes of heart are morally good or bad, accordingly as the motives, principles, or ſuppoſed truths or doctrines believed, on which theſe exerciſes are founded, are good or bad, or have their foundation in truth or falſehood. If the latter, they are all morally bad, if the former, they are morally good. How abſurd is it then to talk of morality and virtue as conſiſting in external actions, which do not ſpring from any good principles or motives; but from bad ones, or from none at all!

It is worthy of obſervation, that you and all thoſe who zealouſly eſpouſe and propagate this opinion are apparently inconſiſtent with yourſelves, and that in two ways. *Firſt*, in that while you are inſiſting upon this doctrine, and wiſhing to make all believe it, that it is no matter what men believe, if their lives be good, you are, in direct contradiction to the doctrine you eſpouſe and to yourſelves, repreſenting *this doctrine* as important to be believed by all. *Secondly*, While you are inculcating

cating the notion, that it is no matter what doctrines men believe, you appear to be greatly displeased with, and enemies to the scheme of doctrines called *Calvinism*, and endeavour to run them down, and represent them as hurtful delusion, and very dishonourable to God: and appear to be great friends to the opposite scheme, called Arminian doctrines, and to associate with those who espouse them, and endeavour to propagate them. And it is observable that those ministers, who endeavour to preach so as to steer clear of the doctrines that are peculiar to the Calvinistic or Arminian scheme, and for reasons which may easily be known by the attentive and judicious, endeavour to conceal their real sentiments on these points; and the better to cover and justify themselves in their way of preaching, insist that these doctrines are of no importance, and it is no matter what men believe, if their lives be good: it is observable, I say, that such ministers give clear evidence many ways that they are friends to Arminian doctrines, especially by associating most with those who are friendly to them, and endeavouring to promote such as candidates for preaching and the ministry. In short, it is evident to all who attend well to the matter, that all who espouse and propagate the notion, that if men's lives be regular, it is of no importance what their creed is, are not friendly to Calvinistic doctrines; but are really friends to the contrary.

I therefore hope you will wholly discard this foolish, wicked, unscriptural, absurd notion, which has been so often advanced for sinister ends; and attend to the subject before us with a belief and sense of the infinite importance that we should all know and practise the truth.

I have before observed, that the subject we are about to enter upon, involves the divine character, and the character of man, so that they who differ and oppose each other in their sentiments on this subject, differ as much in their thoughts and opinion of God and of man; and this their difference in sentiments originates in their different and opposite ideas of the character of God and of man. Therefore, they who think alike and agree respecting those characters, will be of one mind respecting the doctrines in question: and so far as they differ in their ideas and conceptions of God and man, they will differ in their sentiments on this subject. And I may add, that men generally agree or differ in their speculations and views of the character of God and man, according to the moral state and disposition of their own hearts, for the moral character of God and man is that on which the decision of questions on this subject turns, of which men will generally judge, according to the taste and disposition of their own hearts. If their hearts be right, and conformed to the moral perfection of God, they

muſt be pleaſed with his moral character, and will naturally, unleſs there be ſome intervening impediment in the way, diſcern the truth and judge right on this ſubject. If, on the contrary, the heart be of a bad diſpoſition, contrary to the truth, and conſequently an enemy to the moral character of God, and diſpleaſed with it, this will influence his ſpeculative judgment, and lead him to think he has good reaſon and ſtrong arguments in favour of the error which is agreeable to his heart, unleſs ſomething takes place to prevent his underſtanding and judgment being influenced and governed by the inclination and dictates of the heart, which may be, and ſometimes, if not often, is the caſe. I ſay *generally*, and if no ſpecial impediment intervene to prevent; for in ſome inſtances, and in how many we cannot ſay, perſons of very corrupt hearts, and vicious inclinations, which are indulged by them, yet in their ſpeculative ſentiments and judgment are convinced of the truth, and will argue well and zealouſly for it, and ſhow the unreaſonableneſs and abſurdity of the contrary errors. This may be the effect of an early good education, by which their reaſon was convinced of the truth, before the contrary inclination of their hearts was ſo ſtrong and perceivable, and they gradually get habituated to this way of thinking, and they live among thoſe who profeſſedly embrace the truth, and they often hear the reaſons for it, and the oppoſite error condemned and confuted; and it may be their parents, relations, and the party with whom they are connected are profeſſed friends to the truth. From theſe cauſes, and many others which it is needleſs to mention, men may hold the truth in unrighteouſneſs, and be ſtrong advocates for it, while their hearts really oppoſe it, and they be at the ſame time inſenſible of it.

On the other hand, there may be perſons whoſe hearts are in a degree morally good, who really love the truth, who yet, by education, and in other ways, early, in ſpeculation, imbibe ſtrong prejudices againſt the truth, and by hearing it often greatly miſrepreſented and ſpoken againſt, and ſet in the worſt light, as moſt unreaſonable, dangerous and hurtful, their prejudices are more and more confirmed and habitual, ſo that they can hardly bear to hear theſe doctrines mentioned, and chooſe not to think of them; hence it is difficult, and even impoſſible in ſome inſtances, to convince them of their ſpeculative errors, or perſuade them properly to attend to the ſubject, while at the ſame time the moral and religious exerciſes of their hearts are in a prevailing degree, agreeable to the truth, and oppoſite to their errors in ſpeculation.

Conſidering all this, it certainly becomes every one careſully to attend to his own heart, and be concerned to ſtudy and think on this ſubject with an honeſt and good heart, and admit nothing

nothing in ſpeculation as true, which is not agreeable to the dictates of ſuch a heart, and that he is not governed by any prejudice, or bias of an evil heart, in his reaſoning and forming a judgment concerning it. And it becomes us to think and ſpeak of thoſe doctrines which affect the character of God, and have a more immediate reſpect to that, with ſerioufneſs, reverence and caution, leſt we ſhould inadvertently, or while we imagine we are doing the contrary, think and ſpeak in a manner diſhonourable to him. In the view, and with an impreſſive ſenſe of all this, let us with reverence and godly fear attend directly to the ſubject before us. And ſince the character of God is ſo much concerned and implied in it, as has been obſerved, it is proper and neceſſary firſt to attend to that, and conſider what God is as he is revealed in the holy ſcriptures.

The God made known in the Bible exiſts neceſſarily, without beginning or end, abſolutely independent, unchangeable in his being, attributes, perfections, ideas or thoughts, and deſigns: his power is infinite, he is omniſcient and omnipreſent. Theſe are called the natural perfections of God in diſtinction from what are termed his moral perfections; which are his infinite, unchangeable wiſdom, goodneſs, integrity or juſtice, truth and faithfulneſs: all which is denoted by theſe names, is comprehended in LOVE. Therefore it is ſaid in the ſcriptures, "God is LOVE," plainly denoting that *love* is the ſum of the moral character of God, and really comprehends the whole of it, being united with his omnipotence, omniſcience, &c. from which reſults, or rather, in which is comprehended, his infinite, unchangeable felicity in the knowledge and enjoyment of himſelf, which belongs to his moral perfection. It is to be obſerved here, that the moral perfections of God, though diſtinguiſhed from thoſe called natural, do ſuppoſe, and ſo depend upon the latter, that they cannot exiſt without them; for where there are no natural powers, there cannot be any moral character.

Now ſuch a Being exiſting, muſt determine what he will do, whether he will create any thing, or not; and if he determine to create, he can have nothing to conſult and influence him in his determination but his own will and pleaſure, and muſt therefore of himſelf determine what he will do, and lay a plan of his works, perfectly pleaſing to himſelf, including every creature and thing, whether inanimate, animate, or rational, with all their powers, circumſtances, with all their motions and actions, of whatever kind or nature, and every event both great and ſmall, with all their attendants and conſequences from the beginning to the end. A Being of infinite power, knowledge, wiſdom, and goodneſs, muſt thus determine and fix every thing, action and event, the moſt minute as well as the greateſt, and could not avoid doing it, conſiſtent with his character;

acter; for he could not but know what was the wiſeſt and beſt plan, including all that has been mentioned; and his goodneſs could not but prefer ſuch a plan and fix upon it to be executed in every particular included in it; for not to be pleaſed with that which is wiſeſt and beſt, and not to chooſe it ſhould take place, is contrary to goodneſs, and implies the worſt and moſt hateful character; and he has ſufficient power to execute ſuch a plan, dictated by infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, in the moſt exact and perfect manner. It is therefore impoſſible that any thing ſhould be in the way, to prevent this, in any reſpect, or the leaſt degree. Conſequently every thing, motion and event, from the greateſt to the leaſt, contained in this projected plan, muſt be fixed from eternity by the purpoſe and decree of God, and will certainly come to paſs; and not the leaſt alteration could be made in it, without rendering it imperfect, unwiſe and evil. It is therefore demonſtratively certain, from the revealed character and perfections of God, that he has from eternity *foreordained whatſoever comes to paſs*. And to deny, or even doubt of this, is an impeachment of the divine character, his infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, of his unlimited power and underſtanding; and is a ſort and degree of blaſphemy, and a contradiction to what is abundantly aſſerted in the holy ſcripture.

The Bible, from the beginning to the end, is on this plan, and in many ways aſſerts this doctrine. It is there declared, that God made all things for himſelf and for his pleaſure; that he hath done whatſoever he pleaſed in heaven and on earth, and in all deep places; that all his works are known unto him from eternity; that he is of one mind, and nothing can turn him; his counſel or decrees ſtand forever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations; he doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can ſtay his hand; that he worketh all things according to his eternal purpoſe, after the counſel of his own will; that all things, which are done and take place by the inſtrumentality and wicked agency of man, do come to paſs by the determinate counſel and foreknowledge of God. And the ſame doctrine is aſſerted in many ways, and numerous paſſages in the Bible, which it is needleſs now to mention, as thoſe which have been cited are more than ſufficient to eſtabliſh the point we are conſidering.

I would now aſk, What good man, who is a real, underſtanding friend of God and man, can be diſpleaſed with this doctrine? Muſt he not be greatly pleaſed and rejoice in knowing that infinite knowledge, wiſdom and goodneſs, clothed with omnipotence, has laid the wiſeſt and beſt plan that can be, by which the greateſt poſſible good is promoted and will be effected,

effected, in the brighteſt diſplay of the divine character and glory, and the greateſt general happineſs of creatures; and that this plan, including all things and events, which have been or ſhall be, even every character, and all the actions of moral agents, is unalterably fixed by the decree of an unchangeable God? Will it not be a great ſupport and unſpeakable comfort to ſuch a man to be aſſured, that all things are unalterably fixed, and ſhall come to paſs ſo as to iſſue in the greateſt poſſible good, on the whole, and that nothing can prevent it? and muſt not the contrary ſuppoſition, that all things are not ordered, and do not take place in the wiſeſt and beſt manner, but might have been better on the whole, all things conſidered; and that there is no evidence that the iſſue will be the beſt that could be, but far otherwiſe; I ſay, muſt not ſuch a belief or ſuppoſition be moſt diſagreeable and diſtreſſing to ſuch a man, and leave him, without ſupport, to ſink in darkneſs and deſpair?

*Ag.* I acknowledge, Sir, that the doctrine which you advocate ſeems to be agreeable to the ſcriptures which you mention, as you underſtand them; and the arguments which you have mentioned appear plauſible, and the doctrine would be pleaſing, were it poſſible; and were there not great and ſtrong objections, which are thought by many, and I believe to be, unanſwerable, and ſufficient to overthrow it. I am obliged to take my leave for the preſent; but when I ſhall have opportunity, I will, with your leave, ſtate to you the moſt weighty of theſe objections, and hear how you will anſwer them.

*Phil.* With all my heart. Adieu for the preſent.

(*To be continued.*)

## AWFUL WARNINGS.

THERE was in a populous Swiſs village a pious and excellent clergyman, who preached and lived with ſuch holy zeal and exemplary piety, that many were converted under his miniſtry. But there lived in the ſame place a wicked and abandoned character, who not only ſlighted all the means of grace, but turned the moſt ſerious matters and expreſſions of his miniſter into ridicule, and made them a public laughing ſcoff. Once he came very early in the morning to the public-houſe, and began to intoxicate himſelf with liquor, repeating his old wicked tricks, profaning the name and word of God, and ridiculing the term *converſion*. "Now," ſays he, "I myſelf

ſelf alſo will become a convert," turning himſelf from one ſide to the other, and dancing about in the room with a variety of fooliſh geſtures: he quickly left the room, fell down the ſtairs, broke his neck, and expired as an awful monument of God's moſt righteous vengeance, which ſometimes, even in this life, overtakes them that abuſe his name, and prove a ſcandal to their fellow-creatures. *Evan. Mag.*

A worthy Proteſtant Clergyman in Mountpelier, related the following Awful Warning, upon the authenticity of which the Reader may rely;—

A FEW years ago, ſeveral French ſoldiers, quartered in that part of the country, aſſiſted a good honeſt peaſant in gathering in his harveſt. A thunder-ſtorm, accompanied by a torrent of rain, overtook them in the midſt of their work. Being thus interrupted, they got ſo angry, that they broke out in the moſt blaſphemous language againſt the Holy One of Iſrael. "Had I but my gun;" ſaid the moſt impious among them, "I would ſoon put this troubleſome thunderer to ſilence." His wicked comrades laughed applauſe! but the ſimple good peaſant was ſo ſhocked with the enormity of his crime, that he fled, as it were, from the immediate deſtruction, which he was afraid would overtake them: and ſo it was. The blaſphemer had hardly finiſhed his vain threatenings, when a tremendous clap of thunder was heard;—four of the ſoldiers were ſtruck dead on the ſpot, and the fifth was carried ſenſeleſs to the city.
*Evan. Magazine.*

## OBSERVATIONS ON JEREMIAH xvii. 9.

*"The heart is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked; who can know it?"*

THE word heart is uſed in ſcripture to expreſs ſeveral things. "The honeſt and good heart," is expreſſive of a holy diſpoſition and reliſh, with a mind open to conviction, and diſpoſed candidly to ſeek, and readily to embrace divine truths. "A broken heart," is expreſſive of penitential grief, or godly ſorrow on account of ſin. "An evil and hard heart," denotes perverſeneſs and ſtubbornneſs of diſpoſition. "To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children," is of the ſame import as to unite them in ſentiment, deſign and purſuit. "Let no man's heart fail," is of like meaning with the expreſſion, let do man be diſcouraged. The want of a heart denotes want of underſtanding

ſtanding and prudence. "Ephraim is like a ſilly dove without heart." "This people's heart is waxed groſs, leſt at any time they ſhould underſtand with their heart," &c. that is, they are in ſuch a ſtate of moral ſtupidity as to receive no ſalutary impreſſions of divine wiſdom. "The prophets ſpeak a viſion of their own heart;" they prophecy according to their own inclinations, or as they are biaſſed by ſelfiſh views and conſiderations. "No man layeth it to heart;" no man gives himſelf any concern about the ſubject.

In theſe and in ſeveral other ſenſes the word heart is uſed in the ſcriptures. In general it is expreſſive of moral character. A man of a good heart, is a man of a good moral character, or a truly benevolent man; and a man of a bad heart, is a wicked man or impenitent ſinner.

In the paſſage of ſcripture under conſideration the word heart may be uſed to expreſs both the intellectual and moral character of man. The heart as *deceitful* ſeems remotely, at leaſt, to reſpect the judgment, and the underſtanding, which, ſtrictly ſpeaking, are not moral qualities of the ſoul. To practiſe deceit, the intellectual powers of man muſt be employed; but then it is to be obſerved, that deceitful practices originate from a wicked heart. But the heart, as *deſperately wicked*, evidently intends the moral condition or character of unrenewed man.

The general idea compriſed in the paſſage appears to be this, that the heart or moral character of man, and eſpecially of unrenewed man, is extremely wicked, by which he is ſeduced into deceitful and erroneous apprehenſions of things, and led to falſe concluſions and purſuits. He deceives himſelf, and deceives others. The deceit and wickedneſs of his heart are ſo great, that he cannot comprehend and fully know it, much leſs is it fully known to others.

The obſervations which follow will principally relate to the *deceitfulneſs* of the heart, conſidered in a complex ſenſe, as implying a wicked temper, and its natural conſequences, a darkened underſtanding and perverted judgment. The underſtanding and all the intellectual faculties of the mind are greatly darkened and warped by the wickedneſs of the heart. "Having the underſtanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of the heart," that is, on account of the wickedneſs of the heart. The light of divine truth is exceedingly diſagreeable to wicked men, and therefore they will not come to the light. It is through the wickedneſs of their hearts that they are led to put darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs; bitter for ſweet, and ſweet for bitter; good for evil, and evil for good. And from this ſource it is that all their principal errors, at leaſt, in ſentiment, with relation to religious ſubjects, originate. But are

theſe

theſe errors of an innocent and harmleſs nature? Far otherwiſe. Mankind are altogether criminal and without excuſe for their intellectual darkneſs, for a biaſſed judgment, and for their erroneous ſentiments in religion. Moral depravity, the grand ſource of ſpeculative error, is of a voluntary nature; hence mankind are juſtly accountable for all the errors and evil conſequences, reſulting from it.

We ſhall conſider the deceitfulneſs of men's hearts, with relation to each other, and with relation to themſelves. Firſt, with relation to each other. How much artifice, deceit, and intrigue, are practiſed by mankind, to impoſe upon and deceive each other!

A late writer of diſtinguiſhed rank, abilities, and modern refinement in manners, appears exceedingly ſolicitous in his epiſtolary correſpondence with his ſon, that he ſhould poſſeſs accompliſhments, which would inſure him the approbation and applauſe of the world. To effect this he perpetually inculcates it upon him, to practiſe, in many inſtances, at leaſt, deceit and hypocriſy; to *ſeem* to be, what in reality he *was not*; to appear deeply to ſympathize with the ſorrowful and afflicted, although he might ſecretly rejoice at their ſufferings; to aſſume the guiſe of friendſhip and affection for thoſe, whom he might deſpiſe in his heart, and view with contempt; to proffer his aſſiſtance to thoſe, for whoſe welfare he might have no concern, and to whom he might deſign never to extend an act of kindneſs; and to appear ſerious and devout, when in company with the ſerious and devout, although a perfect libertine and infidel in heart. Thus in his Letters to his Son, while on his tour of Europe, he ſtrongly recommended it to him to ſeem to be what in reality he was not.

Theſe letters have been publiſhed and had a very extenſive circulation in the literary and civilized world. They have been read by multitudes with great avidity, and by many the pernicious advice, which they contain, has been greedily imbibed and ſtudiouſly practiſed.

But to learn the art of deception, it is not neceſſary to read thoſe peſtilential letters. It is an art, which mankind but too eaſily learn, and in which they become proficients, without an inſtructor. How ſoon are children ſelf-taught, and how ſoon do they diſcover much adroitneſs in the art of diſſimulation! How much ingenuity and addreſs do they ſoon diſcover, in order to conceal their diſobedience and other faults! And how does this evil trait of character grow with their growth, and ſtrengthen with their ſtrength!

In the common intercourſe of life, how often is it the caſe, that we meet with thoſe, whoſe words are ſmoother than oil, while war, and the moſt treacherous deſigns are in their hearts!

To

To our faces they are all complaiſance, civility and kindneſs; behind our backs, all is ſlander and evil ſpeaking. In how very few, comparatively, can we place confidence! So general is the practice of deceit and treachery, where ſhall we find thoſe, to whom we dare reveal the ſecrets of our breaſts without fear of being betrayed? How much occaſion do we find for hearkening to and profiting by the advice of the prophet, "take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and truſt ye not in any brother; for every brother will utterly ſupplant, and every neighbour will walk with ſlanders. And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not ſpeak the truth; they have taught their tongues to ſpeak lies," &c.

In their mutual commerce and dealings with each other, mankind practiſe diſhoneſty and deceit. It is not unfrequent that the ſeller induſtriouſly conceals the defects of his commodities, and labours to ſet off their value beyond the truth, that he may enſure a price for them diſproportionate to their real value; the buyer on the other hand is not leſs induſtrious in depreciating the goods offered to his purchaſe, that he may obtain them at a price below their worth. "It is naught, it is naught, ſaith the buyer, but when he has gone his way, then he boaſteth." When he has made what is called a good bargain, by cheating his neighbour, he exults and triumphs in his ſucceſs. Thus, too generally do mankind ſport themſelves with their deceivings. Lord, what is man! With his looks, with his tongue, and with his actions he uſeth deceit. SILAS.

*(To be continued.)*

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THE

# NATURAL HISTORY OF THE LION,

## SPIRITUALLY IMPROVED.

GOD, whoſe wiſdom appears in all the infinitely diverſified forms of nature, hath inſcribed on every creature its proper character in marks indelible and unequivocal. Such is particularly the caſe with the noble animal before us, whoſe fiery eye and flowing mane inſpire us with awe and terror.

The natural hiſtory of the Lion is ſo well known, that we ſhall treat it very curſorily. Its native regions are in the interior of Africa, where he reigns

"Sole monarch of all he ſurveys,"

few animals ever attempting to diſpute with him the right of

 ſovereignty.

ſovereignty. The magnanimous Dr. Vanderkemp, among other dangers, has been much among theſe terrible animals. He mentions herds of them, to the number of an hundred, whoſe footſteps he has traced in the deſert; and from whom he was preſerved, in ſeveral inſtances, almoſt by miracle. It is a gracious diſpenſation of Providence, however, that this creature in a great meaſure loſes its native courage and ferocity as it approaches the haunts of men; and is ſeldom known to make inroads on ſociety, except when compelled by extreme hunger. And even when individuals of men and beaſts have fallen within its power, it has been known generouſly to ſpare their lives, when it has not been in want of food. It is a creature alſo highly ſuſceptible of grateful impreſſions for benefits long ſince received, and may be tamed more eaſily, if taken young, than many other beaſts of prey.

The ſcriptures name ſeveral kinds of this animal, to which it frequently alludes. Jacob bleſſing Judah compares him, or rather his tribe, to a *lion's whelp*—a full-grown *lion couched down*, i. e. reſting in conſcious ſecurity, and (not an old lion, but) *a lioneſs* having young, which makes her more ferocious than the male. Job diſtinguiſhes "the lion (*Ariah*, the uſual name) the fierce," or rather the *black* (i. e. dark-coloured) "lion, the young lion—the old (full grown) lion, and the ſtout lion's whelps." The woody parts of the banks of Jordan are particularly mentioned as the haunts of theſe terrible creatures; and we have repeated inſtances in ſcripture of their being uſed as the inſtruments of the divine diſpleaſure; while, on the other hand, when they have been employed againſt his people, he hath ſhut their mouths, as in the caſe of Daniel, that they might not hurt them.—Thus the Lord reigns even among the ſavages of the deſert.

The ſcriptures frequently make uſe of the character of the lion, as the type of a tyrant and a deſtroyer. Nero is compared to one; and a greater tyrant than even he was, is deſcribed as "a roaring lion, ſeeking whom he may devour." In one inſtance, however, they take the fairer part of this animal's character—his ſtrength, courage, ſagacity, magnanimity, are the qualities intended to be conveyed when the great Meſſiah is deſcribed as "the Lion of the Tribe of Judah;" though it is probable alſo that it may contain an alluſion to the ſtandard of that tribe, which the Rabins tell us was that animal borrowed from the form of the ſacred cherubim, or rather, perhaps, from the bleſſing of the patriarch Jacob.

It may ſeem extraordinary that the ſacred writers ſhould borrow their illuſtrations from an object ſo terrible, when they meant to do honour to their ſubject; but the fact is, they were ſo full of the glory of the Saviour, that they could ſee no admirable

mirable or attracting quality in any object in nature, but they applied it to the great object of their esteem and veneration.

Nor is this all; the same Jesus, who is the Saviour of his people, is the Judge of his enemies; and those who will not embrace him as the Lamb of God, should prepare to meet him as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, when the great day of his wrath shall come. "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver."

"Where grace can neither melt nor move,
The Lamb resents his injur'd love;
Awakes his wrath without delay,
And Judah's Lion tears the prey." WATTS.

## ORDINATIONS.

INSTALLED, at Wenham, pastor of the church of Christ in that place, the 10th ult. Rev. RUFUS ANDERSON, lately pastor of a church in North Yarmouth, Maine. The public solemnities of the day were introduced with prayer by the Rev. MR. HUNTINGTON of Topsfield; Rev. MR. WORCESTER of Salem preached, from Eph. i. 23. *The fulness of him that filleth all in all;* Rev. DR. DANA of Ipswich offered the ordaining prayer; Rev. MR. WADSWORTH of Danvers gave the Charge; Rev. MR. ABBOT of Beverly gave the fellowship of churches; Rev. MR. Dow of Beverly offered the concluding prayer. A very pleasing unanimity attended the call and settlement of Mr. ANDERSON; and the solemnities of his installation were observed with uncommon seriousness and decency of deportment.

ORDAINED, at Glouceſter, (Cape Ann) pastor of the first church in that town, the 7th inst. the Rev. PEREZ LINCOLN. Introductory prayer, by Rev. MR. FLINT of Cohasset; sermon, by Rev. MR. WHITNEY of Quincy; consecrating prayer, by Rev. MR. ALLYNE of Duxbury; charge, by Rev. DR. CUTLER of Hamilton; right hand of fellowship, by Rev. MR. ABBOT of Beverly; concluding prayer, by Rev. MR. WHITNEY of Hingham.

AT

AT Albany, N. Y. paſtor of the Reformed Dutch church in that city, on the 8th inſt. the Rev. JOHN MELANCTHON BRADFORD, ſon of the late Rev. EBENEZER BRADFORD of Rowley.

AT Danvers, paſtor of the ſouth church in that town, the 14th inſt. Rev. SAMUEL WALKER. The Rev. DR. MORSE of Charleſtown offered the introductory prayer; Rev. MR. SPRING of Newburyport preached, from Jer. xxiii. 28. *The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him ſpeak my word faithfully; what is the chaff to the wheat? ſaith the Lord;* Rev. DR. CUTLER of Hamilton offered the conſecrating prayer; Rev. MR. HOPKINS of Salem gave the charge; Rev. MR. WADSWORTH of Danvers gave the right hand of fellowſhip; Rev. MR. WORCESTER of Salem offered the concluding prayer.

## RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

### FOREIGN.

THE Miſſion in the Welch language was firſt undertaken in the year 1800; and the bleſſing of God has remarkably accompanied it. No leſs than fifty ſeven Societies had been formed in Auguſt, 1803, conſiſting of 1344 members. And from advices received lately, there is reaſon to believe that this important work is ſtill rapidly advancing; and that there are now 1700 perſons at leaſt, who, by means of the Welch Miſſion, have exchanged ignorance and vice for the bleſſings of Chriſtian knowledge and Chriſtian virtue.

In Ireland, the Miſſionaries are ſtill unwearied in their labours, and, conſidering the peculiar difficulties they have had to encounter, they too have been favoured with great ſucceſs. Many of the poor and ignorant Catholics have now heard, received, and obeyed, the genuine doctrines of Chriſtianity. By recent accounts it appears, that a wide door is opening for the ſpread of the goſpel in that part of the United Kingdom. Numbers are determined to riſk the diſpleaſure of their prieſts, and to hear and judge of truth for themſelves. The little Tracts, diſtributed by the Miſſionaries, are read with much avidity

avidity; and the beſt effects, both civil and religious, are likely to reſult from the plan of preaching the goſpel to the Iriſh in their own native language.

But the principal object of the Methodiſt Miſſion has, for many years, been the inſtruction of the Negroes and People of Colour in the Weſt Indies; and the bleſſing of Heaven has crowned with moſt ſignal ſucceſs the labours of thoſe who have been employed in that quarter of the world. Many thouſands of ſlaves, and others, have been reſcued from heatheniſh darkneſs and ſuperſtition, and are at this time living ornaments to the profeſſion of Chriſtianity. And there is good reaſon to believe, that many thouſands more, having lived the life, have alſo "died the death of the righteous," and are now, "forever with the Lord."

There are at preſent 19 Miſſionaries in the different iſlands; who have nearly 100,000 perſons under their inſtruction. When the laſt returns were made up, there were more than 14,000 of the Blacks and Coloured People formed into religious Societies; many of whom are truly converted to God; and all, as far as the Miſſionaries know, fulfil with propriety the relative duties of life, their own maſters being judges. Or, if occaſionally there be any who tranſgreſs the rules of morality, they are excluded from the Society, at leaſt after a neglect of due reproof. And it may be added, that they have all abandoned the practice of polygamy, their moſt beſetting ſin: and the fatal influence of Obeah (witchcraft) is effectually deſtroyed, wherever Chriſtianity prevails.

In proof of the general good conduct of the Negroes, when an office which implies truſt and confidence, ſuch as that of watchman, is vacant, it is an uſual practice, in ſeveral of the iſlands, with the planters or their managers, to inquire for a religious Negro, who may fill it. And in Antigua, Nevis, Tortola, and St. Vincent's, the owners of eſtates, and other inhabitants, are ſo fully ſatisfied with the conduct of the Miſſionaries, and ſo conſcious of the political as well as religious advantages reſulting from their labours, that they entirely ſupport the work in thoſe iſlands by voluntary contributions and ſubſcriptions.

At this time there are preſſing applications from various iſlands for more Miſſionaries; and Divine Providence is raiſing up men qualified for the work, and ready with all humility, to go wherever God ſhall direct.

*Extract*

*Extract from Dr. Vanderkemp's Letter, in South Africa, to the London Miſſionary Society.*

THE Lord continues to bleſs our labours, and the kingdom of his grace ſeems to ſpread itſelf more and more among the poor Hottentots; and the progreſs of our ſcholars in reading, writing, and religious knowledge, is equally aſtoniſhing as (if I may call it ſo) the miſſionary ſpirit and zeal which animates our new Chriſtians, whenever they find an opportunity to profeſs the name of Chriſt before the world and the heathen. Theſe three particulars will appear the more aſtoniſhing to one who is acquainted with the natural languor, ſtupidity, and averſion from every other kind of mental or bodily exerciſe characterizing this nation. This ſhews, that nothing is impoſſible for God! To him we commit our, or rather his own work, the ſucceſs of your undertakings, and the direction of all your thoughts and actions to the glory of his name.

DOMESTIC.

WE have heard, with great pleaſure, that very conſiderable revivals of religion have recently taken place, and yet continue, at Wrentham, at Providence, R. I. and at Williamſtown. Williams' College, we are informed, is ſharing in the gracious work. From Wrentham we hope ſoon to receive more particular information; particular accounts alſo from the other places would be gratefully received.

## CENT SOCIETY.

*May*, 1805.—*Money, &c. received by the Treaſurer of the following Perſons for the Female Cent Society.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| By Rev. Dr. Emmons, from ladies in Franklin - - | 19 | 77 |
| By Rev. Samuel Worceſter, from ladies in Salem - | 43 | 11 |
| By Rev. David Sanford, from ladies in Medway - | 5 | 20 |
| By Rev. Jonathan Strong, from ladies in Randolph | 5 | 50 |
| By Rev. Samuel Spring, from ladies in Newburyport | 24 | 25 |
| By Rev. Mighill Blood, from ladies in Buckſtown - | 6 | 50 |
| By Rev. Jacob Norton, from ladies in Weymouth - | 4 | 30 |
| By Rev. Elijah Pariſh, from ladies in Byfield - - | 11 | 74 |

By

| | |
|---|---|
| By the Ladies in Holliſton - - - - - - | 7 50 |
| By Rev. John Cleveland, from ladies in Wrentham - | 5 52 |
| By Rev. Titus T. Barton, from ladies in Fitchburg - | 9 72 |
| By Rev. Eliſha Fiſk, from ladies in Wrentham - - | 5 52 |
| By Mr. —— Whitman, from ladies in Bridgwater - | 6 00 |
| By Rev. Mr Goff, from ladies in Sutton - - | 9 73 |
| By Rev. Samuel Niles, from ladies in Abington and Pembroke - - - - - - - - | 14 56 |
| Together with three teſtaments from a lady in Pembroke. | |
| By Rev. Joſiah Barker, from ladies in Middleborough | 3 50 |
| By Rev. Daniel Hopkins, from ladies in his connexion | 22 20 |
| By Rev. Mr. Prentiſs, from ladies in Medfield - - | 10 00 |
| By Rev. Nathaniel Howe, from ladies in Hopkinton | 2 08 |
| By ditto from Mrs. Kezice Goddard - - - | 2 00 |
| By Rev. Paul Litchfield, from ladies in Carliſle - | 3 25 |
| By Rev. Mr. Noyes, from ladies in Needham - | 5 00 |
| By Mr. James Baker, from ladies in Dorcheſter - | 11 50 |
| By the Society in Uxbridge - - - - - - | 5 18 |
| By Rev. Eliphaz Thayer, from ladies in Braintree - | 4 29 |
| By a number of ladies in Newton - - - - | 5 44 |
| By Rev. Mr. Long, from ladies in Milford - - | 3 64 |
| By Caſh received from a number of ladies in Boſton - | 137 34 |
| By Rev. Dr. Morſe, from ladies in Charleſtown - | 56 00 |
| By Rev. Titus T. Barton, from a friend - - | 1 00 |
| From Mr. David Hyſlop - - - - - | 5 00 |
| By Rev. Seth Stetſon, from his Society in Plymouth | 15 86 |
| | $ 472 20 |

Received from ſeveral ladies in Boſton the following books as a donation to be ſent by the Miſſionaries.

194 Tracts on ſeveral ſubjects.
12 Dr. Lathrop's Sermons on keeping the Sabbath.
3 Vols. Dr. Doddridge's Riſe and Progreſs.
6 Vols. ditto.
1 Bible.
2 Pſalm Books.
24 Tracts.
10 Sheets Cloſet Companion.

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POETRY.

# POETRY.

## JESUS CHRIST,

*The ſame yeſterday, and today, and forever.*

1 IS Jeſus evermore the ſame?
Lean then, my ſoul, upon His name;
O bid thine unbelief be gone,
And learn to live by faith alone.

2 View his unchanging mercy here,
Jeſus the ſame from year to year;
From age to age enduring ſtill,
The ſame in goodneſs, power and ſkill.

3 His pity ſaw th' expiring thief,
And chang'd for endleſs life his grief:
His grace is now as rich and free
As when He hung upon the tree.

4 Still His compaſſion is the ſame
To all that love and fear His name;
Stronger than death His truths abide,
And none can turn His love aſide.

5 No time can alter His decrees,
Nor change His precious promiſes:
His word ſhall ſtand through endleſs day,
When Heaven and Earth are paſs'd away.

6 But O how weak my faith appears,
How prone to yield to doubts and fears;
Miſtruſting when I'm chang'd in frame,
That Jeſus is not ſtill the ſame!

7 Why do I act ſo vile a part,
And grieve my dear Redeemer's heart?
Eſtabliſh, Lord, my wav'ring mind,
And keep my unbelief confin'd.

8 O help my faith to ſoar above,
To reſt in Thine unchanging love;
Thy faithfulneſs I now adore,
Ne'er would I grieve my Saviour more.